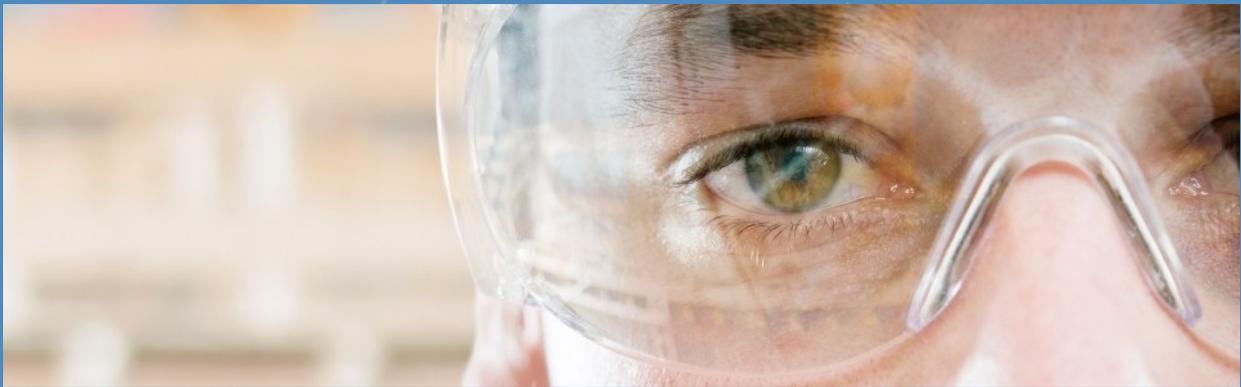




# UPDATE

July/August 2014

A bi-monthly newsletter for Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health Care System, and for those who serve Veterans. Send news items and comments to St. Cloud VA Health Care System, Attn: Public Affairs Officer, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303, or via email to [Barry.Venable@va.gov](mailto:Barry.Venable@va.gov)



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## Calendar of Events

Tuesday, July 1 & 15, August 5 & 19 (12 to 2 p.m.)—**St. Cloud Area Veterans' Law Clinic**. Free legal consultation for Veterans for: Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320-253-0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment. Appointments are held at the St. Cloud VA in Building 28, Room 126.

Thursday, July 3 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.)—**Mobile Vet Center** at Princeton Library, 100 4th Ave. S., Princeton, MN. Offering free, confidential counseling services to Veterans and their families from a staff made up of nearly 65% combat Veterans as well as information about St. Cloud VA Health Care services and eligibility.

Friday, July 4 (10 a.m.)—**Joetown Rocks Parade**, St. Joseph, MN. Come and see St. Cloud VA's Mobile Audiology Van in the parade.

Monday, July 7 and August 4 (8:10 a.m.)—Listen to the **Veterans Affairs Radio Show** on KNSI, AM 1450/FM 103.3.

Tuesday, July 8 (9-10 a.m.), or Wednesday, July 23 (2-3 p.m.) or July 30 (6-7 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for July is *Starting the Conversation: Advance Care Planning*. To register, call Jess Behrends, St. Cloud VA, 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Tuesday, July 8, through Tuesday, August 12 (4:30-6:30 p.m.—every Tuesday)—**Free Summer Golf Instruction (Women's Session I)**. All equipment is provided (you may bring your own clubs if you wish). **All applicants must receive care from St. Cloud VA Health Care System**. For more information and to register, call Brett Jagodzinski at (320) 252-1670, ext. 6663.

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## Calendar of Events

Wednesday, July 9 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**Minnesota Veterans' Career Fair** at Earle Brown Heritage Center, 6155 Earle Brown Drive, Brooklyn Center, MN. Workshops, resume review, job opportunities and educational information available. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Thursday, July 10, through Thursday, August 14 (4:30-6:30 p.m.—every Thursday). —**Free Summer Golf Instruction (Men's Session I)**. All equipment is provided (you may bring your own clubs if you wish). ***All applicants must receive care from St. Cloud VA Health Care System.*** For more information and to register, call Brett Jagodzinski at (320) 252-1670, ext. 6663.

Wednesday, July 16 (1:00-1:30 p.m.)—**Quarterly Memorial Service** at the St. Cloud VA Chapel. Memorial service for Veterans who have recently passed away.

Wednesday, July 16 & August 20 (8:10 a.m.)—Listen to the **Voices for Veterans Radio Show** on WJON AM 1240.

Thursday, July 17 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.)—**Mobile Vet Center** at Mille Lacs County Public Works Garage, 6813 State Hwy 27, Wahkon, MN). Offering free, confidential counseling services to Veterans and their families from a staff made up of nearly 65% combat Veterans as well as information about St. Cloud VA Health Care services and eligibility.

Friday, July 18 & August 15 (12 to 2 p.m.)—**Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic** at the Montevideo CBOC. FREE legal consultation for Veterans. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320-403-1051 to schedule an appointment.

Saturday, July 19 (7 p.m.)—**Richmond Go Hog Wild Parade** in Richmond, MN. Come and see the St. Cloud VA's Mobile Audiology Van in the parade.

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## Calendar of Events

Sunday, July 20 — **Senior Day at Sherburne County Fair**, 13372 Business Center Drive, Elk River, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Sunday, July 20 (1-3 p.m.)— **Mobile Vet Center at Women’s Equality Day**, Hanger Conference Center, 15000 Hwy 115, Bldg 8-195, Camp Ripley, Little Falls, MN. Offering free, confidential counseling services to Veterans and their families from a staff made up of nearly 65% combat Veterans as well as information about St. Cloud VA health care services and eligibility.

Sunday, July 20 (5:05 p.m.)—**St. Cloud Rox Baseball Military Appreciation Night**, Joe Faber Field, 5001 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN. St. Cloud Rox Baseball, in partnership with Country Manor Health Care and Rehab Center, will give away a Hero Baseball Card Set featuring local Veterans and active military to the first 300 fans.

Wednesday, July 23 (1-6 p.m.)—**Freedom Fest at Isanti County Fair**, 3101 Hwy 95 NE, Cambridge, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Thursday, July 24 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.)—**Red Lake Comprehensive Health Services Fair** at the Humanities, 23750 Minnesota 1, Red Lake, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Saturday August 2 — **Military Organization Day at Wright County Fair**, 1010 1st Street, Howard Lake, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

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## Calendar of Events

Wednesday, August 6 (11 a.m.-10 p.m.)—**Kandiyohi County Fair**, 907 7th St. NW, Willmar, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Sunday, August 10 (Noon-4 p.m.)—**Military Day at Benton County Fair**, 1410 3rd Ave. S., Sauk Rapids, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Tuesday, August 12 (9-10 a.m.), or Wednesday, August 20 (6-7 p.m.) or August 27 (2-3 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers-right from your home phone! Topic for August is *Finding Your Voice: Self Advocacy in Medical Settings*. To register, call Jess Behrends, St. Cloud VA, 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Thursday, August 14 —**Senior Day at Douglas County Fair**, 300 Fairgrounds Road, Alexandria, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Friday, August 15 —**Swift County Fair**, 500 Reuss Ave., Appleton, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Saturday, August 16 (8 a.m.-Noon)—**12th Annual Expo for Seniors**, Rivers Edge Convention Center, 10 4th Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Tuesday, August 19, through Tuesday, September 23 (4:30-6:30 p.m.—every Tuesday)—**Free Summer Golf Instruction (Women’s Session II)**. All equipment is provided (you may bring your own clubs if you wish). ***All applicants must receive care from St. Cloud VA Health Care System.*** For more information and to register, call Brett Jagodzinski at (320) 252-1670, ext. 6663.

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## Calendar of Events

Thursday, August 21, through Thursday, September 25 (4:30-6:30 p.m.—every Thursday)—**Free Summer Golf Instruction (Men's Session II)**. All equipment is provided (you may bring your own clubs if you wish). ***All applicants must receive care from St. Cloud VA Health Care System.*** For more information and to register, call Brett Jagodzinski at (320) 252-1670, ext. 6663.

Saturday, August 23 (11 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**Mille Lacs County Veterans' Day Event**, Mille Lacs County Public Works Garage, 6813 State Hwy 27, Wahkon, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Tuesday, August 26 (8 a.m.-4 p.m.)—**4th Annual Military Appreciation Day at the Minnesota State Fair**, 1265 Snelling Ave. N., St. Paul, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

### **DID YOU KNOW**

—During the early days of the Gold Rush in San Francisco a glass of whiskey would cost as much as \$7.

—When a piece of glass cracks, the crack travels faster than 3,000 miles per hour.

### **QUOTATION OF THE DAY**

"My car is God's way of telling me to slow down."

- *Dick Sharples*



## 4th of July Celebrations Across the State of Minnesota

- \* **Afton: 4th of July Parade (651-436-8883)**
- \* **Albert Lea: 3rd of July Parade (507-373-2316)**
- \* **Alexandria: Free 4th of July Summer Concert on the Courthouse Lawn (320-763-3161)**
- \* **Annandale: 125th Annual 4th of July Celebration (July 3-6) (320-274-8216)**
- \* **Baudette: Old Fashioned 4th of July Celebration (July 3-4) (218-634-1174)**
- \* **Brainerd: 4th of July American Celebration (218-829-2838)**
- \* **Brainerd: 28th Annual Show & Go (July 4-6), Brainerd International Raceway (218-824-7223)**
- \* **Cloquet: 4th of July Veterans Celebration (218-879-1551)**
- \* **Crane Lake: 4th of July Parade & Fireworks (218-993-2901)**
- \* **Crosslake: Celebrate America 44th Annual Fireworks Display (July 5) (218-829-2838)**
- \* **Deerwood: Fireworks at Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge (July 5) (218-678-2885)**
- \* **Detroit Lakes: 4th of July Fireworks (218-847-9202)**
- \* **Duluth: 4th Fest 2014 (218-722-4011)**
- \* **East Grand Forks: Sertoma Fun4th & Fireworks (701-746-0444)**
- \* **Elysian: July 4th Celebration (507-267-4040 or 507-267-4231)**
- \* **Eveleth: 4th of July Celebration (218-744-2121)**
- \* **Excelsior: Lake Minnetonka 4th of July (952-474-6461 or 952-474-6461)**
- \* **Fairmont: Annual Music Festival & Fireworks (507-235-8585)**
- \* **Garrison Bay: July 4th Fireworks (218-851-2389)**
- \* **Gilbert: Gala Night Parade & Fireworks (July 3) (218-748-2232)**

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- \* **Grand Marais: 4th of July Celebration & Fireworks (218-387-2524)**
  - \* **Grand Rapids: 4th of July Fireworks on Pokegama Lake (218-326-9607)**
  - \* **Harmony: 4th of July Celebration (507-886-2469)**
  - \* **Lakeville: 48th Annual Pan-O-Prog (July 4-13) (952-985-4400)**
  - \* **Maynard: 4th of July Celebration (320-367-2140)**
  - \* **Moorhead: Minnesota State University-Moorhead 42nd Annual 4th of July Celebration (218-236-2011)**
  - \* **Moose Lake: Old Fashioned 4th of July Celebration (218-485-4145 or 218-380-3394)**
  - \* **Onamia: July 3rd Celebration (320-532-3202)**
  - \* **Orr: Fun Day at the Bay (July 3) (800-777-4690)**
  - \* **Park Rapids: Hometown 4th of July (218-732-4111)**
  - \* **Pegquot Lakes: Stars and Stripes Days (July 3 and 4) (218-568-8911)**
  - \* **Richfield: 35th Annual 4th of July Celebration (July 2-5) (612-802-5182)**
  - \* **St. Cloud: 67th Annual 4th of July Fireworks (320-251-4170)**
  - \* **St. Joseph: Joetown Rocks 4th of July Festival (July 3 & 4) (320-363-7505)**
  - \* **St. Paul: Due to significant flooding expected on Harriet Island, A Taste of Minnesota cannot be held there July 3-6. A Taste of Minnesota is evaluating other location options for the festival on July 3-6 and will notify the public as soon as they have more information to provide. (651-224-3228)**
  - \* **St. Peter: Old-Fashioned July 4 (507-934-3400)**
  - \* **Sleepy Eye: 4th of July Festivities & Fireworks (507-794-3211)**
  - \* **Starbuck: Heritage Days (July 3-6) (320-239-4220)**
  - \* **Stillwater: Fourth of July Fireworks & Fun (651-351-1717)**
  - \* **Waconia: 4th of July Fireworks over Lake Waconia (952-442-5812)**
  - \* **Wahkon: 4th of July Fireworks (320-495-3441)**
  - \* **Walker: 4th of July Celebration (218-547-1313)**
  - \* **Waseca: Lakefest 4th of July Festival (507-835-3260)**

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HOW **do I**

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with  MY  own

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## Recently-launched HealthLiving Assessment Benefits Veterans, Caregivers, and Clinicians

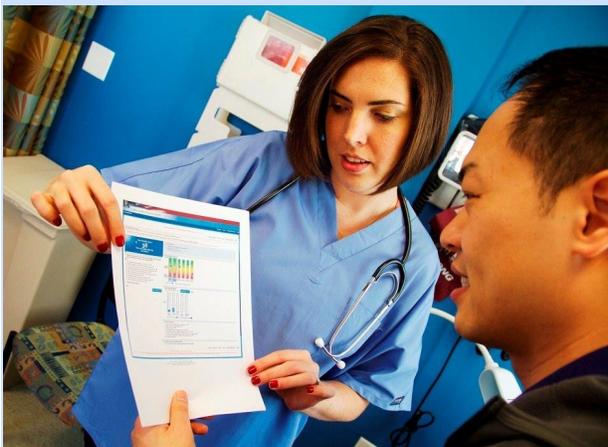
A powerful new health tool offers Veterans—and their caregivers—a confidential assessment of the long-term impacts of their health habits and choices. And it empowers them by providing health information about "do-able" actions that may improve and maintain their well-being.

### Personalized, Confidential

Available 24/7 through My HealthVet (<https://www.myhealth.va.gov>), the HealthLiving Assessment (HLA) asks the Veteran a set of personalized, confidential questions about his or her health history and status. During the approximately 20-minute online assessment, the Veteran responds to a variety of user-friendly questions, including those covering Veteran-specific issues. Responses about diet, physical activity, blood pressure, seat belt use, stress, family medical history, alcohol, tobacco, and many more health issues are used in an algorithm to then calculate the Veteran's "health age" and disease risks.

### What is 'Health Age'?

Health age is a measure of your overall health relative to your actual, chronological age. Health age estimates the effect that your lifestyle and other health factors have on your life expectancy. If your health age is lower than your actual age, for example, it means that you have a healthier lifestyle than the typical person of your age and have potentially increased your life span.



"Both a summary and a detailed report are generated for each Veteran user," explains Heidi Martin, Clinical Informaticist at NCP and the HLA's Clinical Project Manager. "In addition to risks and health age, these reports provide health promotion recommendations, unique resources for the Veteran, and information on the resulting impacts on the risks of major disease."

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An interactive capability on the HLA allows users to select recommendations, and then recalculate their assessment and risks—providing insight into which changes produce the most benefit to disease prevention and overall health. Veterans who select “stop smoking”, for example, see an immediate, positive change in health age and reduced risks for cardiovascular disease and certain cancers.

### **Patient-Centered**

"Evidence shows that when patients see the impacts of their health choices, they become interested in improving and changing their behaviors," says Dr. Linda Kinsinger, VA's Chief Consultant for Preventive Medicine. "And sometimes patients just need to see improvement in one health area to get the ball rolling towards more comprehensive health and behavior changes."

Kinsinger and Martin see the HLA as another example of VA's proactive, evidence-based care that can lead to positive changes for Veteran-users, whose feedback was incorporated during the assessment's development.

The HLA also provides important benefits to VA health care teams. A saved or printed version of an HLA report can be shared with the health care team to improve communication and shared decision-making among Veterans, caregivers, and providers. "It's information that can reinforce providers' recommendations, and health age, for example, can be a different, but effective way of showing the impact of risky health behaviors and positive health changes. A high health age can be a real 'wake-up call' for patients," says Martin. "Ultimately, the HLA will help enhance patient-centered care: it's not only a 'conversation-starter' on health status, but also a tool to help clinicians and patients better partner in the process of positive health change."

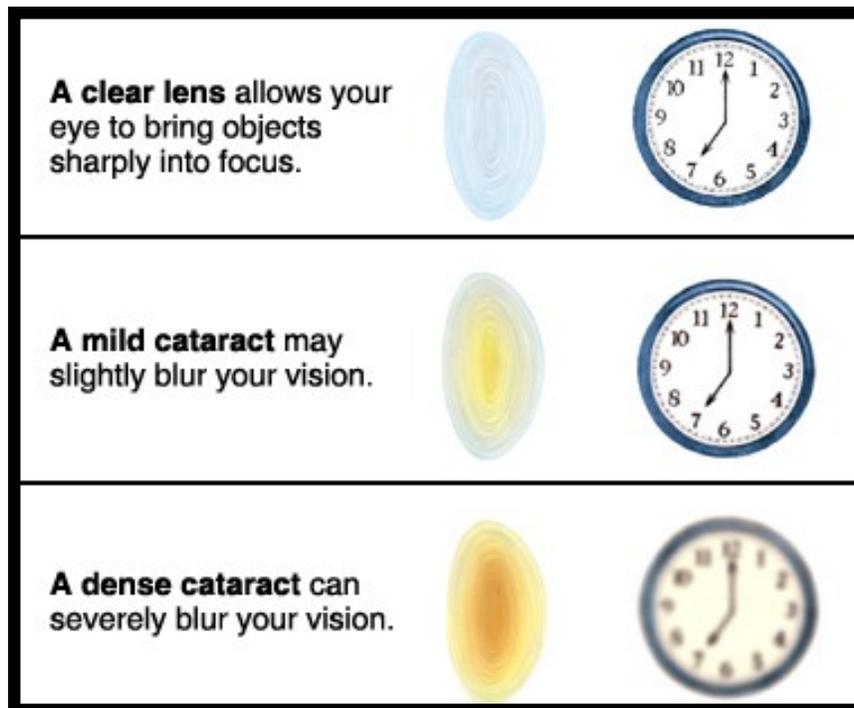


# healtheliving assessment

# Cataracts

*What are they and how do you know if you have one?*

A clear lens in the eye focuses light. This lets the eye see images sharply. With age, the lens slowly becomes cloudy. The cloudy lens is a cataract. A cataract scatters light and makes it hard for the eye to focus. Cataracts often form in both eyes. But one lens may cloud faster than the other.

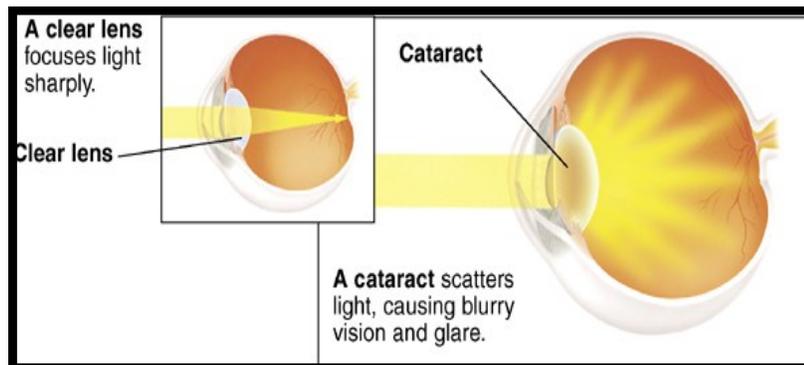


Your lens may cloud so slowly that you don't notice any vision changes at first. But as the cataract gets worse, the eye has a harder time focusing. In early stages, glasses may help you see better. As the lens gets cloudier, your doctor may recommend surgery to restore your vision.

# Cataracts: Your Evaluation

An evaluation will help your eye doctor learn more about vision problems you're having and whether cataracts are the cause. This evaluation includes a medical history, vision tests, and an eye exam. What the doctor learns will help him or her determine the best treatment options for you.

You will be asked questions about your vision and any other eye problems you may have. Your eye doctor will also ask about health problems, such as diabetes. Be sure to



mention if you are taking any medications, supplements, or herbal remedies.

Your eye doctor will perform several tests to check your vision. This includes using an eye chart, and testing your vision under different lighting. If you wear eyeglasses or contact lenses, bring them to the exam. This lets your eye doctor check the prescription.

During an eye exam, the doctor uses a slit lamp and an ophthalmoscope to look inside your eye. In most cases, eye drops are used to dilate (widen) your pupils before the exam.

After an eye exam, you and your eye doctor will discuss treatment options. A new eyeglass or contact lens prescription may improve your vision for a while. But surgery is the only way to remove a cataract and replace your cloudy lens. If your cataract isn't keeping you from daily activities, you may wait to have it removed. Together you and your eye doctor will decide what's best for you.

# Eye Injury Prevention

## 1. Recognize Hazards

Recognize and respect potential hazards to your eyes. These may include:

- Particles
- Ultra-violet and Infrared Light
- Chemicals

## 2. Cover Your Eyes

Wear appropriate protective eye wear.

Examples include:

- Goggles
- Spectacles
- Face shields
- Welding helmets



## 3. Clean it Up

Be sure your eye wear fits right, it is clean and in good condition. Discard any equipment with cracks or defects.

## 4. Act Wisely

Know what to do in case of an accident or emergency.

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# Rehabilitation Building Construction Update



Artist Sketch

June 2014

Footings are being poured and construction of the new Rehabilitation Center is underway. The new Rehabilitation Center will create additional, modern space to meet demand for expanded rehabilitation therapies and the needs of residential and outpatient patients; replaces antiquated and inadequate space.

The 19,047 sq. ft. single story building will include a central, open therapy area and enhanced activity and treatment areas. The new building will be able to expand a second level in the future.

Contractor: Paradigm Construction, Sioux Falls, SD

Design: Horthy Elving, Minneapolis, MN

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# Mental Health Building Construction Update



November 2013

June 2014

Shingles have been added and interior work continues to progress. The 19,000 sq. ft. building with connecting corridor will provide a safe, secure, and modern environment for the increasing demand for the treatment of numerous mental health conditions.

The interior design allows for enhanced lines of all sight, contains space for modern treatment methods, and is adaptable should treatment modalities evolve over time.

The building will hold up to 20 beds appropriate for short-term, acute inpatient psychiatric care and has the ability to expand for future second level.

Construction began in April 2013.

Contractor: Paradigm Construction, Sioux Falls, SD  
Design: RSP Architects, Minneapolis, MN

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# Walking Path due to Open Soon!



Bold lines outline the Walking Path

Walking Path near completion

Veterans and VA employees are welcome to take advantage of the summer sun and utilize the VA's newest Health Promotion Disease Prevention initiative— the Walking Path.

The Walking Path initiative emphasizes fitness as a lifestyle and has been constructed to enhance the health and well-being of residential Veterans while creating safe walking spaces.

Approximately one mile in length, the walking path includes East-West path across campus and provides 11 benches, emergency call stations, utility feeds, and memorial areas.

A few things to remember before using the Walking Path:

- It is open from dawn to dusk.
- It is not open during the winter.
- No motorized vehicles allowed on the path.
- No smoking allowed on path.

Construction began June 2013

Contractor: The Povolny Group, St. Paul, MN

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# Kitchen Construction has Begun



Mr. Barry Bahl , Medical Center Director, speaks at the kitchen ground breaking ceremony.

Computer generated image of future kitchen.

On April 1, 2014, at the kitchen ground breaking ceremony, Angela Gross, director of nutrition and food service, said the new building will offer many advantages, including all new equipment. “While our current equipment has served us well, the new kitchen equipment will provide for greater efficiency of operations and allow us to cook meals with improved freshness and nutritional value,” she said.

Gross said the new food services building will serve as the central food preparation area and management hub for food service operations supporting all patient beds. It will directly serve Veterans in the 148-bed Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program and 15-bed acute psychiatry unit. The new kitchen will also serve as the base of operations for a satellite kitchen in Bldg. 50, which provides tray service for the 225-bed Community Living Center.

Once the construction of the food services building is complete, a planned follow-on project will remodel the current kitchen space into an additional Primary Care Clinic in the central core of the campus, she added.

According to project engineer Jon Copeland, the new building, including connecting corridor, is designed as an approximately 18,000 sq. ft., single story structure, with a design and exterior finish similar to existing buildings. The building includes a basement, and the structure is designed to allow for the addition of a second story should future needs require expansion.

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# Expanded Pharmacy Open for Business



L-R: Nicole Pelzer, Congresswoman Bachmann's Office, Barry Bahl, Medical Center Director, Dr. Susan Markstrom, Chief of Staff, Richard Stambaugh, Chief of Pharmacy, Lisa Fobbe, Senator Franken's Office, Meri Hauge, Nurse Executive, and Mike Gussiberg, R Preusser Construction Company.

“The mortar and pestle have been replaced with computerized dispensing machinery, but the role of the pharmacy in ensuring the safe and effective use of medications remains unchanged,” said Rick Stambaugh, Chief of Pharmacy at the St. Cloud VA.

The construction project added 2,000 square feet and renovated approximately 5,500 square feet in Building 5. “The result is a reconfigured Pharmacy with increased workspace, security, and access points that will improve efficiencies to better serve our growing Veteran population,” Stambaugh said.

With the construction near completion, the ribbon cutting ceremony took place on May 29, 2014.

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## A glimpse into the future

MELROSE, Minn.— For today’s dairy farmers, using robots to milk cows is not a foreign concept. But for three retired dairy farmers, it is something they never would have imagined.

Richard and Dorothy Middendorf and their son, Dennis, and his wife, Tayna, hosted a group of war veterans from the St. Cloud VA hospital on June 2 at their 100– cow robotic dairy farm, 3D Dairy, near Melrose, Minn.

“It is really cool to have these guys out here,” Tayna said. “I am glad we are able to do something like this for them.”



Dennis’s sister, Jenny Minnette, who works at the St. Cloud VA, had submitted a video of her family’s robotic dairy farm to the managers of the hospital.



“They thought this would be a great place for the veterans to come and visit,” Tanya said.

“It is something different for them to do,” Dennis said.

Six veterans attended the tour and three of them were previous dairy farmers.

“Those three sure got something out of this trip,” Dorothy said.

Floyd Borchert milked 30 cows almost 50 years ago in a stall barn with three Surge milking units. For him, the robots were a bit of a surprise.

“I never thought dairy farmers would use robots to milk the cows,” Borchert said. “By golly, they seem to work pretty good.”

Everett Bragg used to work on dairy farm near Wichita, Kan.

“We had three stanchions the cows would come into to be milked,” Bragg said. “The last time I milked was in 1957 right after I got out of the service. This is the second farm I have been to since then.”

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As the robot milked one of the cows at the Middendorf farm, Bragg watched awestruck.

“Those robots are something else,” Bragg said. “I never thought milking would be done like this. The fact that it can hook itself up to the cow is pretty amazing.”

Another past dairy farmer, Virgil Eichers, milked 25 cows in a stall barn during his career. During the tour, he tried to imagine what it would be like milking with a robot.

“For me, I think it takes the fun out of farming, but it sure beats milking by hand,” Eichers said with a laugh.

The last time Eichers milked was in 1980.

“It’s been a long time since I milked cows. I used to haul milk in a 60-pound bucket,” he said. “These guys don’t have to carry milk in a bucket anymore. Things sure have changed.”

The Middendorfs answered many questions about the robots, and how the cows were producing with them, but they also heard numerous stories from the veterans.

“I think they were amazed at what the machines could do,” Dennis said. “But the stories were pretty neat.”

Tayna agreed.

“We heard so many stories,” she said. “They told about how things were back in the day. For them everything has changed. I hope to have them out here again.”



*By Missy Mussman  
of the Dairy Star*

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## **Veteran logs 1,000 hours driving fellow veterans to VA**

WILLMAR— It's 7:45 a.m. on a foggy Tuesday and Wayne Emberland is going over paperwork and chatting with the three military veterans— all men from Willmar— who have medical appointments at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center.



The 71-year-old Emberland, who served more than 30 years in the military himself, is driving the vets to their appointments. Emberland's service included multiple tours of duty in foreign countries and bases all around the U.S. before retiring from the Reserves in 1999 as a chief master sergeant.

He left the parking lot of the Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services building at 8 a.m. with veterans.

He had no idea what time the day would end, but said it's not unusual for trips to the VA to last 10 to 12 hours.

And he loves every minute he spends with the veterans.

"They don't realize it, but they give something back to me, too" said Emberland. "It feels good to do it."

Emberland has been driving Kandiyohi County veterans to the St. Cloud VA for seven years in the volunteer position, which does include an hourly stipend.

So far Emberland has logged 1,000 hours of service.

Next week the St. Cloud VA will honor Emberland for his time on the road helping veterans receive the medical care they need.

"It's nice to see him get some recognition for all that he does because he does a wonderful job," said Trisha Appeldorn, Kandi-yohi County Veterans Service Officer.

Drivers from 10 counties are being recognized during the ceremony, but most of the awards are for 750 hours, she said.

Emberland is one of the few drivers with 1,000 hours.

"Wayne has some long days. Everyone thinks St. Cloud is just an hour away and they're there and back," said Appledorn, adding that many times the van leaves Willmar at 6 a.m. and may not get back until 7 p.m.

But she said Emberland's service goes far beyond driving.

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“He takes care of these veterans. He gets them where they need to go. He makes sure they get to their appointments,” said Appeldorn. “He’s just so kind and nice and he worries about them. He really is a compassionate guy.”

Emberland said he treats the veterans like he wants to be treated— with kindness and respect.

It’s a practice that works “even for those that eat bullets for breakfast,” he said.

The trip back and forth to Willmar to St. Cloud includes a fair share of visiting.

“There are some that like to talk— a lot” he said, with a laugh.

Emberland got the thumbs-up from his passengers.

“Oh yes. I’ve been with Wayne many times,” said Richard Barnes. “He’s a good driver.”

“I love it,” said Gene Johnson. “Good driver? Yup.”

While the vets are at their appointments, Emberland doesn’t sit around in the waiting room but is helping other veterans.

Volunteer drivers in the program are required to receive federal civil service training for driving and responding to emergencies at the VA, including medical situations or if a veteran is lost, he said.

“When we’re there, we’re the yes and ears for the personnel of the VA,” said Emberland.

Providing transportation for vets to the VA in St. Cloud and Minneapolis is one of the services provided by the county Veterans Service Office.

Appeldorn said another Willmar man, Wendell Johnson, has been driving county veterans to the Minneapolis VA as long as Emberland and probably logged as many hours. But she said the Minneapolis facility apparently doesn’t track the volunteer hours or conduct recognition ceremonies.

Appeldorn said the county's recently retired 13-passenger van was replaced last month with a new, smooth-riding six-passenger van.

The larger van isn’t needed anymore because “we’re losing a lot of our vets and our trips aren’t as big anymore,” said Appeldorn.

The van was purchased with the help of a state grant, county funds and donations from area service groups.

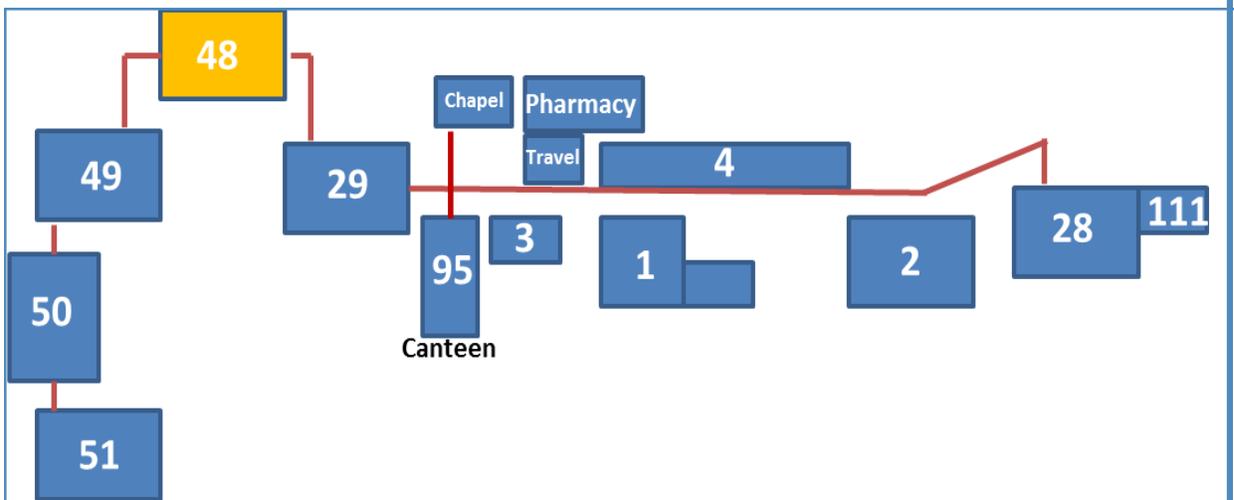
*By Carolyn Lange. Reprinted with permission of West Central Tribune.*

The Patient Advocate Office has moved...  
but we still want Veterans to find us!

## Patient Advocate Office/ VSO/VBA/American Legion

is now located in  
**Bldg. 48, Room 237 (2nd Floor)**

Contact us at:  
**320-255-6353**  
or via MyHealtheVet secure messaging.



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# *A Recipe for Health* **Fresh Broccoli Salad**

## *Ingredients*

6 c. fresh broccoli florets	1 ½ tsp. sugar
1 (8 oz.) can sliced water chestnuts, drained	1 ½ tsp. cider vinegar
½ c. dried cranberries	1 ½ tsp. Dijon mustard
¼ c. chopped red onion	¼ tsp. salt
¾ c. reduced-fat mayonnaise	⅛ tsp. pepper
¾ c. fat-free plain yogurt	¼ c. slivered almonds, toasted

## *Directions*

In a large bowl, combine the broccoli, water chestnuts, cranberries and onion. In a small bowl, whisk the mayonnaise, yogurt, sugar, vinegar, mustard, salt and pepper. Pour over the salad: toss to coat. Just before serving, sprinkle with almonds. Serving size: ¾ cup.

## *Nutritional Information*

144 calories, 8g fat, 272mg sodium, 16g carbohydrates, 3g protein



*Take care of your buddy!*

Help a fellow Veteran enroll  
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Service Officer, call the St.  
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